

BRIARPATCH

Volume 30, Number 5

June 2001

\$3.00



A veil of democracy
over a system of exploitation and exclusion
demands exposing.

Alternatives
that feed human beings without destroying their environment
demand proposing.

A system
that betrays the common good in favour of a few
demands opposing.

Ryan Meili



Clouds of gas shortly after the march arrived at the
fence on Friday afternoon.

photos: Neil Sinclair

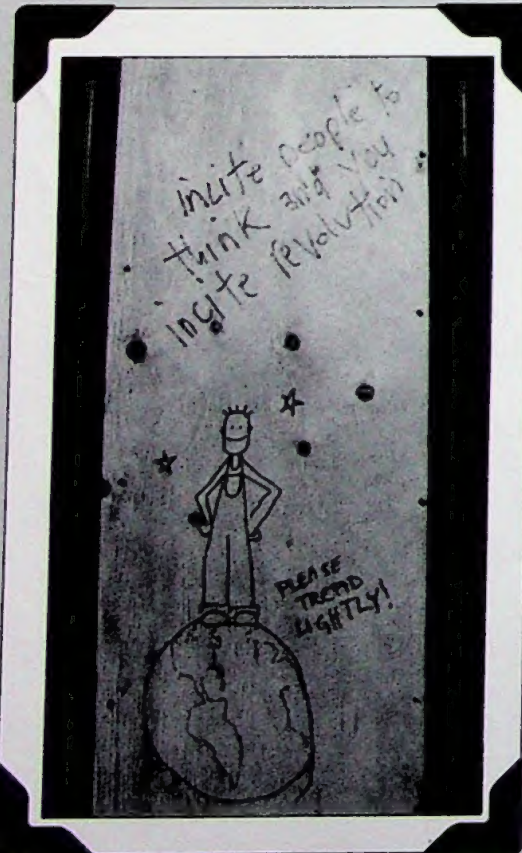


THANKS

This special photo/essay issue of Briarpatch is devoted to the stories and images that the mainstream media ignored in their coverage of the events that occurred in Quebec City in April 2001. At page 28 you'll find a postcard to Jean Chrétien if you wish to add your voice to the protests.

A special thank you goes to the unions and supporters who sponsored pages of this issue so more voices could be heard:

- Canadian Labour Congress, Prairie Region
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A boarded-up storefront
photo: Laurie Hergott

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Briarpatch is Saskatchewan's independent alternative newsmagazine committed to building a socialist democratic society. We provide an open forum for disadvantaged peoples and support progressive movements working to change unjust structures and build a genuine political and economic democracy. We support peace, equality, democracy, social justice, Aboriginal self-determination, and the protection of the environment. We oppose the oppression of people on the basis of nation, class, race, gender, ability, and sexual orientation.

BRIARPATCH

June 2001

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INTRODUCTION

What's all the fuss about?

by Loretta Gerlach

It is estimated that over 60,000 people protested in Quebec City during the April Summit of the Americas meeting. The Summit was a meeting of the heads of state from all the members of the Organization of American States (OAS). The agenda of this Summit meeting included items regarding the international drug trade and the promotion of "democracy" but the raison d'être of the Summit is, undoubtedly, the FTAA.

The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) is an extension of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to 34 countries in the Western Hemisphere. Only Cuba has been excluded under the rationale that it is not a democracy. As this article goes to print, the text of the agreement has not been made public but supposedly it will be release after it has been translated into the languages of the member countries. However, we already know from leaked documents (and Chrétien himself) that the FTAA contains the most negative aspects of NAFTA, including a chapter on investment that will allow foreign corporations to sue governments directly over what they consider to be unfair trade barriers to their profit-making ability. Since a panel of trade

experts makes rulings on these disputes, corporations have a high likelihood of winning the challenges. As a result, governments are already reconsidering the way they develop and enforce all kinds of legislation and service delivery with potential investor challenges in mind.

Citizens across the hemisphere are concerned about this increasing infringement on government sovereignty over social programs, environmental protection, human rights, labour standards and other social justice matters. Accordingly, they converged in Quebec City to participate in a People's Summit and to protest in defense of people over profits. The protests in Quebec City were part of the beginning of what has been called the new form of Global Class Warfare.

Loretta Gerlach is the Prairie Regional Organizer with The Council of Canadians which has a long history of fighting free trade arrangements that promote corporate rule over democracy. Loretta was in Quebec City to educate herself and others and, of course, to protest. She will continue to use her experience in Quebec with others in the Prairies to fight the FTAA.

Cuban Solidarity

We have just watched on television the images of the brutal manner with which the authorities of Canada are repressing the peaceful demonstrations of those that protest against the crime attempted to be committed against the political and economic rights of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean in Quebec. It is a shame!

I wish to express on behalf of the people of Cuba our sympathy and admiration for the brave and heroic behaviour of those that struggle there for such a just cause.

Governments that deceive the

world by calling themselves defenders of human rights treat their own people in such a way. In this manner they pretend to discharge their guilt for the millions of children, women, adults and elderly in the world that, being able to be saved, die every year of disease and hunger. Yet they will not be able to sustain the unfair order they have imposed upon human kind.

We convey our fullest solidarity. Cuba supports you, embraces you and greets you with fraternity,
Fidel Castro Ruz

April 20, 2001 (6:00 p.m.)

Inside the Fence

Citizen #R7263 of Quebec City keeps a journal documenting her experiences during the Summit of the Americas.

by Louisa Blair

Tuesday April 17

I walked to my bank Tuesday morning. Large muscular men in black clothes walked up my street. Others drove fast black cars with clouded windows. In front of the church police were questioning some young men wearing red. I was suddenly uncomfortably aware of the colourful Guatemalan glasses case around my neck.

A group of 30 policemen dressed in green stood on a corner receiving instructions. A man lifted mailboxes into his pickup truck. Forty are being removed from within and around the perimeter. The sewer grills and manhole covers have already been soldered into place. A cavalcade of blue trucks was still cleaning the streets, full of salt and layer after layer of pungent dog shit just now emerging from the melting snow. Things will be nice and clean for the heads of state.

The 3-metre high fence fixed in concrete and topped with barbed wire has become a kind of giant canvas. Near the conference centre it is strung with wreaths and garlands of homemade flowers, created from plastic bags, paper plates and wrapping paper. A Moody Blues album cover and a faded picture of Sergeant Pepper flapped in the cold sunshine. Near the Ursuline Convent a nun threaded real flowers into the fence. Here, the barrier winds down a narrow alleyway used 350 years ago by sisters to drive cows out to pasture.

Down the hill, graffiti covers the concrete base: Bush go home, Le mur de honte (Wall of shame), Berlin Nov. 1989, Cuba pas exclu dans nos coeurs (Cuba not excluded in our hearts), Libertad o Muerte! (Freedom or Death!), À mort les cochons (Death to the Pigs), Caroline.

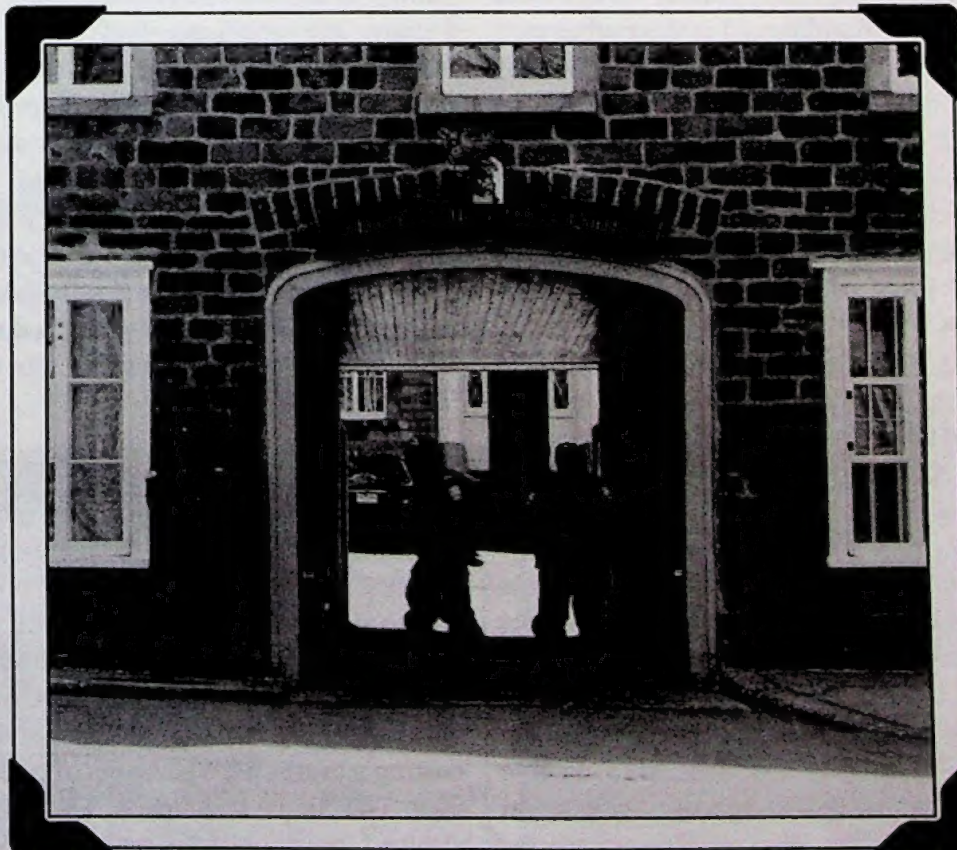
My globalized multinational bank is just outside the fence. "Aren't you afraid these big windows will get smashed?" I asked the bank teller. She wore snake-skin pants and a nose-diamond. "They probably will," she shrugged, "but the building doesn't belong to us anyway. If they get broken we definitely won't come to work on Monday."

Wednesday April 18

Helicopters buzz constantly overhead and today a huge fat grey airplane circled low around the city. It's the second biggest plane in the world, in fact. It is Dubya's,

loaded with a couple of suitcases and his laptop, I suppose. Oh yes, and the Bush-mobile: a modest armoured car. The rumour is that the city gate will have to be demolished to get the car through. That's because this is a walled city with gates at strategic points. The wall was built a couple of centuries ago to keep Americans out. Now a fence keeps the Americans in and the rest out. I guess we lost that war.

The muscular men wearing



The Ursuline School of Quebec
photo: Laurie Hergott

black still walk about: indeed, they swarm. However, today many of them sport a jaunty yellow curly wire running down behind one ear and a small plastic bib with their photo on it.

People who live here look at one other suspiciously in the street. Pro or anti? We fall upon our neighbours of either persuasion in relief and feverishly exchange rumours. Some things around town are reassuringly familiar. The busker who plays "Dust in the Wind" on his electric guitar all summer long is out early, as is Noseman who plays three recorders at once: one in each nostril and one in the mouth.

The stores near the perimeter are being boarded up: some with tastefully painted plywood (Gap), some with unpainted plywood (the shoe stores) and some with chicken wire - a graceful compromise between greed and fear. The pubs are still open and our local brothel seems particularly busy. The Chateau Frontenac lobby was full of police with dogs today. The whole hotel smelled of dog biscuits. I hope the police have bags in their pockets, ready for the dog walks. But perhaps this is a petty concern right now.

Down at the People's Summit, long after everyone else has gone home, the Latin Americans party late into the night.

Thursday April 19

The birds have not stopped singing. Spring proceeds. The muscular men in black with little yellow wires beside their ears now have cell phones clamped to their other ears. Motorcades - each preceded by about a dozen flashing police motorbikes - endlessly parade past our house. Venezuela just arrived, driving very fast. Between motorcades the streets are silent.

At noon, police close the gates. I practise going in and out. At first they just ask to see my security pass. Then they ask for a second piece of identification. I go shopping.

Up on the Plains of Abraham a motley crowd of municipal workers lives in a mobile home. There are gas and hydro workers and the drivers of ten giant tractors that are lined up under a large willow tree. "Just in case something bad happens," said the gas worker, "we can rush down and fix it."

McDonald's is boarded up - it has even plucked its very name off the storefront. Saint Jean Street, by now almost uniformly boarded up, is an instant canvas for ad-hoc artists, as is the 3-metre fence surrounding the governmental summit. The paintings are alternately inspiring, ugly, violent, earnest, ingenious and derivative. People stand along the fence reading. One sign says somewhat testily, "Things on this fence have been put here to be helpful to people. Please don't steal them." There are maps,

balloons, t-shirts, banners, bras, pieces of cardboard, paintings, information sheets, tapestries and quilts.



photo: Laurie Hergott

The fence is becoming beautiful. Inside it are mostly men. The people gradually gathering outside are mostly women. Women in blue plastic capes weave wool through the fence, using it as warp and weft. They give me a ball of red wool. I weave for a while, too. Some of the women wail and some carry effigies of malnourished babies. Some dance with a string of bras. One man wears a gigantic golden spider on his head.

I am inside the fence, looking at the people on the outside. They have no passes. The feeling I have here is similar to the one I have about belonging to a rich country. I enjoy my privilege, feel guilty about it and start to mistrust the outsiders - even fear them. I rush out of the gate again to join the rabble, carrying my groceries. I see three men from Saskatoon. They stayed inside the perimeter when the gates were closed. They offer outsiders chocolate Easter eggs, which they pass through the fence.

After school my daughter and niece bike and tricycle down our street past a hotel full of American Marines. The children go to the utterly deserted wooden boardwalk in front of the Chateau Frontenac. For once, they don't crash into a single tourist.

Friday April 20

I write with eyes burning from teargas. Not from mounting the barricades for democracy, but from playing ball in my neighbours' back yard on this most beautiful of spring days. Suddenly, we all felt pain in our eyes and throats and gathered up the children to go inside. The beautiful day was suddenly sinister - we had no idea what was happening. We turned on local radio which was broadcasting a journalist's screams of pain as he got it full in the face. The fence was down. The war was on. No one was allowed in or out of the perimeter. We listened feverishly while trying to prevent the older children from going out

every five minutes on bikes and skateboards. They had already found some disposable dust masks. The riot squads amassing at the end of our street stopped being amused by children buzzing around them.

Where shall we hide? Should we be making a plan? Does anyone know there are children in here as well as heads of state? I don't feel brave at all. My four-year-old daughter barely looks up from painting an Easter egg and explains to her cousin, "They don't agree with the bosses of the countries." I try to follow everything she says very closely: it calms me. We play dressing up. She dresses as a Viking with a shield and helmet. I try not to listen to the radio or the TV. I invite all the neighbours I know to be alone to come for supper - they don't have a four-year old to paint eggs with. Our local cat-lady tells stories about feline ailments and vets - also very calming. She has taped up her windows so that her cats won't get gassed.

photo: Laurie Hergott



I go for a bike ride. The neighbours I meet all have red eyes. They joke about it: "Lovely day." The policeman on our corner asks me what's happening. He'd seen me ride my bike up to the top of the ramparts to look down at the Conference Centre where the heads of state are meeting. There, the west wind blows gas back at them. "They must have got gassed too," I said. "I hope so," he said. "This kind of business needs to stop. Maybe they'll realize that there's something happening here, that we need a bit more democracy."

Tonight my brother and nephews and I go for a prow. We see Dubya drive home to his hotel room in two limousines (he has two of everything - it keeps the enemy guessing). There is a cortege of vehicles, bristling with men's faces pointing outwards. "Don't make sudden moves," we say to the boys. "Someone might shoot you."

We go up to the part of the fence that was pushed down earlier today. We talk to some people on the other side, mostly unsmiling young men. The police are standing in a rough column in black riot gear with gas masks,

German Shepherds with little red lights on their harnesses, batons and shields. One comes up and tells us to get away from the fence. As soon as we back off they lob some tear gas over it. They begin to march toward the fence, bashing their shields in rhythm. I say, "I want to go home." A minute or two later we stagger blindly, crying burning tears. We choke and yell in pain as we try to run away. My nephew bashes on the garage door of a government building. Some police let us in to wash our eyes.

Saturday April 21

We eat our morning pancakes, looking wearily at the paper. My eyes and skin still hurt from yesterday's tear gas - like bad sunburn. I go down the hill to a church service being held in four American languages. I carry a radio with headphones and a face-mask soaked in water and cider vinegar, which is in a Ziploc bag. The radio will help me figure out how to get home again through the perimeter fence; I'm hoping that they won't close it entirely. The vinegar is for gas attacks.

In the vast church of Saint Roch, people in red capes walk down the aisle carrying a long coil of barbed wire. They drape it around a giant candle and then sing Amazing Grace. Children come and stick flowers in it. We beg forgiveness for our complacency. A framed picture of Our Lady of Guadeloupe is hoisted up into the rafters. Everyone claps. I join the march afterwards, but don't stay long. I want to be with my family. Up the hill toward home the staircases and road going up the cliff are jammed with people. A cloud of gas rolls down. I put on my mask. Demonstrators with children rush down side streets in a panic, throwing coats over their children. I get back through the fence just before they close all the gates again. I make it, thanks to my radio.

The neighbours are all out in the street exchanging getting-in-and-out stories. No one can stay inside for long. My daughter plays with her blocks on the sidewalk. She



photo: Neil Sinclair

The fence is down.

spoke to just a couple of days ago won't be coming to work today, as she foretold. All the windows of the bank are broken. The whole city is covered with graffiti, right up to the sky. My favourite is "Be the change you want for the world." My least favourite is "Fuck Bush, kill 'em all."

I see my friend in Saint Jean Baptiste, a working-class district on the perimeter whose narrow streets were drenched in tear gas all night. This morning people are relieved, haggard, weepy and angry. A family I know had to tape up the windows and doors

of their childrens' bedrooms all night to keep the tear gas out. They are angry they weren't warned about this possibility.

I meet a man who'd brought a giant medieval catapult to pelt Dubya with soft toys. Ten minutes after we meet he's arrested for refusing to take his scarf off his face.

I talk to a young woman who lives alone near the battlefield. She had spent the day sitting at home waiting for her apartment to be blown up - paralyzed with terror. She hadn't spoken to anyone all day. A neighbour comes to my place trembling: she had been sitting reading the paper in front of her house and, after declining to converse with one of the muscular bibbed and wired security agents, he had obscenely abused and threatened her.

I speak to my friends on the edge of town. They are refugees from Burundi. They lived for 12 years in refugee camps, fleeing from country to country. I don't want to dramatize my tales of tear gas and fear and outrage. For a total of about two hours I experienced what they lived for years on end.

Anyway, Dubya's gone home. The gates are open. We can paste our security passes in our scrapbooks, go to bed and try to think this all through in the morning. We all need debriefing.

Louisa Blair, Citizen #R7263, is a mother and writer who lives in Quebec City inside the perimeter.

The street cleaners are out again today. This time they clear broken glass, rags and the topsoil washed out of parks and yards by water canons - as they do after a rainy morning in April. Down in Saint Roch, where the worst fight happened last night, they are using front-end loaders to clear away the charred debris.

The teller in snake-skin with the nose-diamond that I

This article originally appeared on the Rabble website. www.rabble.ca

A word cloud consisting of the word "rabble" repeated multiple times in different sizes, weights, and orientations, creating a dense, abstract shape.

rabble.ca

FAVOURITE THING

I WAS IMMENSELY PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF CANADIANS CONTINGENT BECAUSE WE MADE A MONUMENTAL DECISION TO MOVE BEYOND BEING SOLELY AN EDUCATIVE ORGANIZATION TO ONE THAT SUPPORTS CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

LEAST-FAVOURITE THING

I WAS DISTURBED WITH HOW NONVIOLENT PROTESTORS AND INNOCENT CIVILIANS OF QUEBEC CITY WERE TREATED BY THE POLICE.

Rick Sawa is a doctoral student in educational administration at the U.of S. and went to Quebec City to voice his displeasure with the government-backed corporate takeover of the world and to witness the treatment protesters received from the police.



photo: Dave Durning



Medics at work
photo: Todd Krakowski



Our Lady of Consumption
photo: Laurie Hergott



photo: Dave Durning

My favourite thing about going to Quebec City was witnessing the incredible creativity, courage and resilience of those opposed to the FTAA and global free trade regimes.

My least favourite moment in Quebec City was talking to a family who lived near the perimeter, with nowhere to go because their home was so severely gassed. While they were supportive of the demonstrators, the young daughter was crying and scared and they weren't sure if they could find a place to go that would take in their dog too.

Cara Banks is a Council of Canadians activist from Regina. She regrets not owning a gas mask.

OUTSIDE THE O-FENCE-IVE BARRICADE

The journal of an artist in town to do a little street theatre.

by Shawn Whitney

The preparations for the protest against the Summit of the Americas were a bit like our experience building our "genetically modified capitalist cycloptopus" puppet, The Mister of Cog. It took months of work and planning and improvisation with found materials. It took the involvement of all kinds of people and their enthusiasm. It took a political sense of the importance of being in Quebec and being visible.

But we didn't really know how the puppet would work until the event itself. Would it be too top-heavy? Would the wind blow it over? Would the tentacles, inflated with helium, actually float? In the event, the tentacles didn't float but looked cool anyway. The puppet was heavy as hell but we took turns carrying it. The wind pushed it like a giant sail so the puppet carriers now have over-developed back muscles.

Here is my journal of the events outside the fence.

Thursday:

We arrive Thursday night with our semi-assembled cycloptopus. There are dozens of people waiting for buses

and the mood is upbeat. People are excited. Gordon, our bus driver, takes the scenic route to Laval University. We drive through the centre of Quebec City. Ribbons and graffiti mark the "Wall of Shame" and the boarded-up stores. The stores needn't have bothered. No one was interested in busting up local stores, though the boards made a fine surface for political posters and slogans.

Gordon also

supports the protests. In our minds this is a measure of the popularity of our cause. A survey found that 20 percent of Canadians would have attended the Summit protests, were there no financial or logistical barriers. We travel on back roads through rural Quebec, past a bird sanctuary. Perhaps to help us unwind. Perhaps because Gordon's lost.

Friday:

We arrive at six in the morning. Organizers have spent months arranging billeting for protesters from out of town. A monumental task. We find someone who takes us into the gym where about 2,000 people are sleeping. It's like a giant, righteous army camp. I'm not one for mystical stuff but you can feel the solidarity and community in the air. People smile at you, offer you a hand with your bags, offer food. You don't fear that your stuff will be stolen. We set up shop in a hallway to finish building the Mister.

It's a beautiful day and the most colourful gathering of people I have ever seen. There are puppets and costumes; superheroes, radical cheerleaders, clowns. The cycloptopus, owing to its great height, becomes a meeting point for people looking for friends and comrades. The march is long, well over two hours. We take turns carrying the heavy puppet.

Organizers have been trying to involve the trade unions in actions with young anti-capitalists and last night the



A puppet in the march
photo: Dave Durning

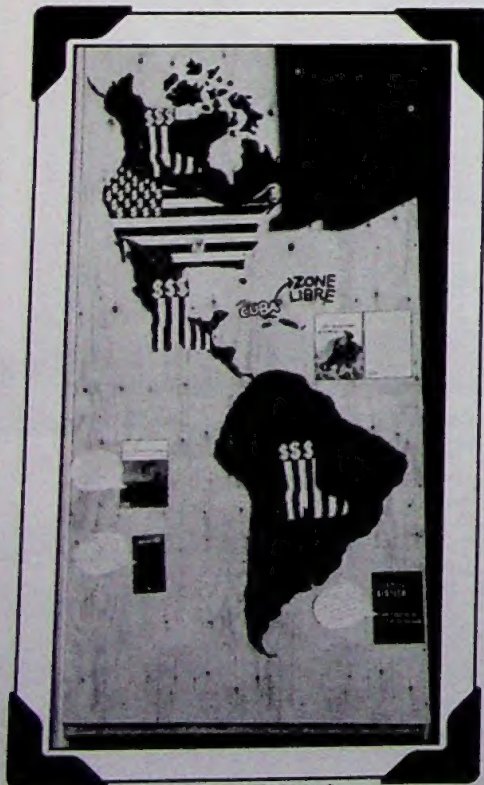


photo: Dave Durning

Canadian Labour Congress announced that a labour affinity group would join our action. About 2,000 workers arrive. There are loud cheers as the two marches meet. And bear hugs. Teamsters and turtles together again.

The plan was to arrive at the Plains of Abraham and block the road in non-violent civil disobedience. There is not a cop in sight so the march begins to head up to the perimeter fence. I think the police were as surprised as us that we would end up right at the perimeter fence. It's just a couple of cops scratching their heads as several thousand students and workers crowd the fence. Someone shouts "tear down the wall!" and the chant is picked up by the crowd. Everyone hates that damn wall - residents and demonstrators alike. It is an inconvenience and an affront to the democratic right to protest and be heard. It is an obvious target for people's anger.

The wall begins to shake and rock. It almost topples but the crowd loses its rhythm for a moment, maybe because they've seen the arrival of dozens of riot cops. Then they begin to rock it again. People that had planned to just march were now trying to tear down the security perimeter.

The police have other ideas and lob the first tear gas grenade over the fence. Over the two days of protests the cops will fire off thousands of them. At one point they place an emergency order to the United States because they fear they will run out. I already have my gas mask out but not before I get a whiff of the smoke. It smells like the chemical smoke used at rock concerts and dance clubs. But the familiar is mixed with a cocktail of much nastier stuff, like super-cayenne. People come streaming out of the crowd, their eyes and noses running. Some throw up or gag on the side of the road. Protesters and police play cat and mouse for several hours. We now carry our wounded puppet on a stretcher.

We're exhausted. The walk back is unbearable. We are saved by some anonymous protesters in a van. They have no room for us but they take the puppet on the roof. We decide to leave the Mister behind tomorrow.

Saturday:

Looking around the gym on Saturday morning I see that there are some sleeping bags that haven't been used. Arrests have thinned our number, if only slightly.

Unbelievably, it's even more beautiful than the day before. I catch the bus to check out the trade union march. It's massive. I am told that it takes four hours for the entire march to pass any given point. Organizers from the Hemi-

spheric Social Alliance estimate the crowd at over 60,000. The media, repeating without question the claim of the police, say 25,000.

Today everyone wants to tear down the fence. Up where the students had been the day before, there is a battle. Thousands of people haven't bothered with either the union march or the student march and have just gone straight to the fence. The police are firing cannister after cannister. The crowd scatters and then regroups. A lone trumpeter plays the music of bullfighters as the fence creaks and bends. On Friday the wind had been blowing strongly back towards the police. It quickly cleared the tear gas. Today the gas sits and billows, filling up the area with its nasty stench. Ah, the smell of democracy is in the air.

Poompf... clank, clank. Poompf... clank, clank. More teargas and the crowd clears. Coming up the street behind us are the Black Bloc, flags waving, drums pounding. They are followed by at least 1000 others. Everyone wants to tear down the fence. In short order the fence is down but no one tries to storm past the cops. Protesters just sit on the fallen fence. A puzzled CBC journalist is reported as saying, "I guess they just don't like the fence." Duh.

For well over an hour the front line protesters sit on the fence while hundreds of people dance to drumming.

Down the street from the breach there is a street carnival. Thousands of people are dancing, picnicking, talking and laughing. There are youth, hippies, anarchists, trade unionists, socialists, you name it. There are no cops outside the perimeter. Funny how happy and friendly people are when there are no cops around. Even the residents, far from hating us, have placed speakers in their windows to blast dance music in the streets. Others have come out with garden hoses for thirsty protesters and those who need to rinse tear gas from their eyes.

Rumours swirl through the crowd that inside the perimeter tear gas is getting into the ventilation systems of the hotels and conference centres. Talk about "hoisted on your

own petard!" The crowd cheers and the drumming picks up more energy.

We liberate pieces of a fallen fence for souvenirs to show our kids and our friends that we were at the Battle of Quebec. The peace doesn't last long though. The cops don't like their failure staring them in the face and they decide to retake the fallen fence. They begin to push through the non-violent protesters. They start firing tear gas and percussion grenades. Those stuck behind the police are arrested and dragged away in plastic ziplock handcuffs that hurt like hell and make your hands go numb.



Collecting souvenirs from the fence
photo: Dave Durning

We head back to Cote d'Abraham. More tear gas, this time in bright colours. It must be the rush order from the states - these cops are hip. My friend decides to get pictures of the new gas and the battle. I decide to liberate a used teargas canister. By now the filter cartridge on my gas mask has stopped working - as I discovered in the middle of a tear gas cloud. It's nasty stuff and I can't open my eyes for 10 minutes. My skin, nose and mouth burn fiercely. I understand why they call this "pain compliance." I'm now low-tech, using my gas mask as goggles and tying a malt vinegar soaked bandana over the breathing part. It smells like I'm trapped in a fish and chips shop.

Night is falling, the crowd is thinning and the cops are starting to systematically take the streets back from demonstrators. Soon the police will start the sweeping arrests - 250 on Saturday night alone. We head back to debrief, sing songs and hear radical chants.

Sunday:

The next morning we board the buses and say our farewells. The cops, CSIS perhaps, sit in a van filming people for future reference. I hadn't realized that keeping records on dissidents was part of a healthy democracy. It's a long bus ride home and everyone is deliriously exhausted but loud and chatty. We discuss the meaning of events,



photo: Laurie Hergott

Poster boy

photo: Dave Durning



NAFTA, the mechanism that allows corporations to directly sue governments for enacting policies that interfere with their profits. It is the jewel in the crown of these trade deals. The Liberals signed NAFTA with Chapter 11. They tried to negotiate a Multilateral Agreement on Investment that contained the same provisions. The Liberals are now saying they won't sign any deal that has such a provision. Of course they are lying. But they have been forced to publicly oppose Chapter 11 and this will come back to haunt them.

What's more, the political pressure of the movement has further exposed the divisions and disagreements between the different countries (such as disputes over environmental

and labour side-deals, or various subsidies). The FTAA is a house of cards being built on sand. It can be beaten.

The growing confidence and the strengthened links between radical youth and the unions were perhaps the most important victories to come out of Quebec. I slept well in my own bed Sunday night.

Shawn Whitney is a writer, performer and puppetista from Toronto. He is a member of Artists Against the FTAA and the International Socialists.

debate the next step for the movement, discuss the nature of money in capitalist society and, of course, we sing. In retrospect we won more than we could have hoped for out of this weekend. It was bigger and more militant than anyone had dared hope. Tens of thousands have been radicalized by the experience of going to Quebec, seeing the cops in action, reading the phony coverage that passes for news in the mainstream media.

And the government blinked. Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew, and later Chretien, denounced Chapter 11 of

the next step for the movement, discuss the nature of money in capitalist society and, of course, we sing.

We're living under what many of us believe to be a criminalization of dissent here and around the world, but who are the real criminals? The violence is coming from the Canadian state. The first violence is institutional violence. The free market is killing millions of people all over the world. Even if some windows are going down on Saturday, that is not violence. Violence is the free market. When laws are unjust, it's criminal not to resist them.

José Bové is the French farmer activist who spoke at the People's Summit in Quebec City. He is well known for his direct action taken against McDonald's Restaurants at an anti-genetically modified food demo in 1998.



protective mask removed and plastic zip tie handcuffs added.

photo: Elaine Brière

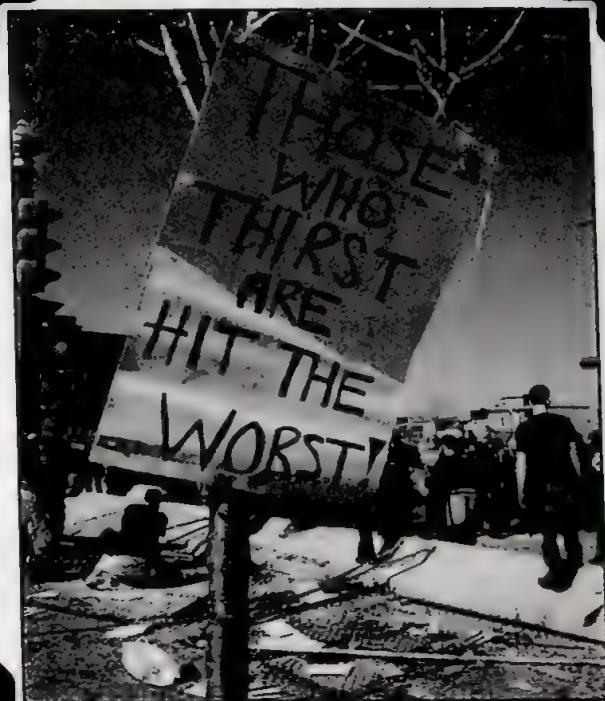


photo: Todd Krakowski



The famous catapault with ammunition in foreground
photo: Laurie Hergott



Protester retrieving ammunition for recycling.
photo: Laurie Hergott

If they can arrest Jaggi Singh and hold him without bail for over two weeks for alleged possession of a weapon designed to fling teddy bears at armed (and armoured) riot police what will they do to you if you ever dare to oppose the government? This is Canada in 2001?

Gary E. Schoenfeldt is President of Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada - Local 911 Regina.

Where's My Son?

A mother describes her frantic quest for information when one of her two children "disappears" after being arrested in Quebec City.

by Martha Tracey

Early in the year Dave tells us he won't be leaving for Ireland on his travel scholarship until after The Summit of the Americas in Quebec City. Our daughter Tracey has already been planning to go to Quebec for a few months. The mother in me doesn't want them there. But the activist in me understands why they have to go.

Mid March: I have a couple of nightmares. I won't go into the content here, but they could only have been related to my summit anxiety. In the nightmares, I'm the person who is left feeling violated. I can't dream that something happens to my children, so in the dreams it happens to me instead. News that they will empty Orsainville Prison to hold all those arrested at Summit protests scares me. So does the talk of rubber bullets. I have heard about the severe physical damage they can do.

Early April: Dave is home for a few days before leaving for Quebec. I tell him (cautiously!) that an arrest in Quebec could interfere with his trip to Ireland and Spain. His tickets are already booked for mid May. Dave tells me quietly that he is not planning to get arrested. He doesn't say it in a cocky "it will never happen to me" manner, but rather as an indication of what actions he'll involve himself in. I feel better.

At some point he tells us that he and Tracey are buying gas masks. I suggest that gas masks might almost invite the police to let loose. (Seems strange writing that now, in view of what happened.) But then I remember that Tracey went to Seattle without even thinking to take her puffer, which she occasionally needs for asthma.

During the People's Summit: Dave and Tracey each phone a couple of times. They are enthusiastic about all the people there, and what's going on. They are appalled

by the Wall of Shame, and amazed and angered by the constant helicopter presence - even through the night. We all think that a climate of fear is being created, and wonder about the impact on local residents. Will they blame Ottawa, or will they resent the protesters?

Friday April 20: My job requires me to be in Saskatoon for a meeting. I drive there that morning, glued to CBC Radio. My meeting is over after lunch. In the car, I catch the 2 PM news. I hear the Wall of Shame is already down in places. The battle is starting. I try to check out a favourite Saskatoon bookstore, but can't concentrate. I start the long ride home.

When I get home the TV is on. We stay glued to it even through supper. Tracey phones from a restaurant around 7 PM our time. It took them a while to find a place to eat. There is heavy tear gas outside, as the battle (in a safe zone!) continues.

The restaurant people tell them they can stay until there is a lull in the fighting. Dave gets on the phone for a while, but then says they have a window of opportunity and must go.

We see Jean Chretien on TV decrying the violence and provocation of the protesters. Provocation by whom, Jean? The Wall of Shame was the first provocation, and guaranteed a fight. So did the

arrogant dismissal of the protesters by you and Pierre Pettigrew. Chretien attempts to justify the inflated security by referring to previous trade-related protests, including Seattle. I notice that APEC in Vancouver is notably absent from his list. Is he still nervous about how that one played out? George Bush is perplexed. Trade is good. Trade brings freedom and prosperity. What's the



Dave with mask
photo: Laurie Hergott



matter with these people, he seems to be asking.

Saturday April 21: Tracey tells us their affinity group will participate in the massive Trade Union protest march, but at one point they will split away from the March and head for the wall to demonstrate their anger at its presence and solidarity with the protesters there. There is very little TV coverage of the March. Instead, they are concentrating on the "cat and mouse" game at the Wall of Shame. We see Sinc Stevens - *Sinc Stevens??!* - expressing his outrage at the massive police overreaction. Never thought I'd agree with you about anything, Sinc!

I tear myself away from the TV to attend a teach-in organized by the Moose Jaw Chapter of the Council of Canadians. About 40 people turn out on short notice on a beautiful Saturday afternoon. Around 3:30 I start feeling "antsy." I want to get home and see what's happening in Quebec. What's happening to my kids? There are no messages on the phone when I get home. I tell myself I am worrying too much.

Tracey phones around 7 PM our time. She says she's fine and things are okay, but she needs us to hear her out.



Tracey with Dave just prior to his arrest

photo: Adam Gagnon

She tells of participating in the labour march, and then turning towards the wall. At some point in the streets, they come across a group of people singing. She says it is truly peaceful, and their group feels more comfortable than they have since getting to Quebec. (They didn't like the rock throwing, and did not participate in it.) They sit down in an alley and continue singing. At some point the riot squad is called in to confront them, even though the wall is down fairly close by and the police are doing nothing about that.

After giving a couple of warnings to leave, the police wade into the crowd, swinging batons and using taser guns. Then they gas them. Tracey receives several shocks on the leg, and her friend gets them on her feet. Dave and two other friends, Ryan Meili and Geoff Ward, are arrested.

Tracey phones again around 2:30 AM our time. She has just received confirmation from the Legal Services people that Dave is indeed in jail at Orsainville Prison. They don't know if there will be charges. Some people arrested earlier in the weekend have been released within 24 hours with no charges. She is on her way to Orsainville for a jail solidarity action.

Somehow Don and I get a bit more sleep. We realize that we should try to get hold of our MP Dick Proctor in Quebec. He is a friend and ally, and all three arrestees are his constituents. Geoff sits on Dick's riding executive.

Sunday April 22: Tracey phones at 8 AM our time. It has been suggested that we should get lots of people to phone the prison. We're to say, "We understand that the three were arrested in a peaceful protest. What are the charges against them, and when will they be released?" My French is rusty, so Tracey gives me the script.

Around 8:30 we wake up Merran Proctor in Regina and get Dick's cell phone number. Good thing the Alliance candidate didn't get elected here, I think! We reach Dick at the Quebec city airport, where he's wait-listed for a flight to Ottawa. He has some useful suggestions, and ends up delaying his departure.

We talk to Don Kossick, a community activist in Saskatoon, and Barb Byers, president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, in Regina. The phone calls start! On my first attempt I am told (in French) that they are still processing people, that they don't have the names of all those arrested and to call back in an hour. Kossick calls back. He got someone fluent in French to phone, and has a different phone number for us to call. The woman at the new number switches me to English, and tells me to call Mr. Lapointe at another number. I think I am getting somewhere, and call Mr. Lapointe. There is no answer at Mr. Lapointe's number. I let it ring and ring. A few minutes later, his line is busy. I think others have reached him, or is his phone now off the hook?

Calls start coming back to us with different responses



photo: Laurie Hergott

people have received. Fiona Bishop, a human rights activist and SGEU staff person, has been reassured by a woman that they are all fine and they're being fed. She provides no response to our questions, however. Barb Byers phones to say that one caller has been told to stop the calls - they are just delaying the processing of the prisoners. We phone Tracey to find out whether to stop or continue the calls. Tracey has heard that maybe we should stop calling. I get hold of Barb Byers. She has got as far as the letter "M" on her phone list, but stops at that.

I keep trying to reach Mr. Lapointe. After all, it's my son that's in there. I never do reach Mr. Lapointe. I am frustrated, scared and angry.

Tracey calls late afternoon to say they're going to camp out at Orsainville overnight. People are being released with no transportation, and are simply wandering off. That can't happen to Dave. I understand why they're doing this, but worry about a police raid on them. They have no cell phone.

Monday April 23: Little sleep again. I go to the gym

for a workout before my workday starts. My headset is tuned to CBC Radio. At 6:30 I hear that Ryan Meili has been released. It is not clear if he has been charged. On the 7:30 news I hear that he has been charged with obstruction. Still no news of Dave and Geoff.

I pick up the *Globe and Mail*. A leaked memo indicates the police were authorized to use lethal force if they felt threatened. This is outrageous!

Tracey calls us and confirms Ryan is out. She says they saw three buses leave Orsainville but the exit was blocked so they couldn't follow the buses. The buses sped through the exit so they couldn't see who was on board. They debated their options and decided to follow the buses. They didn't catch up to the buses. I'm not sure how they meet up with Ryan. They have Ryan's charge in French but aren't sure of the translation. They don't know if Dave has been released.

The Legal Collective gives me the phone number for the Quebec Court. I phone and ask when Dave will be released. A man checks the list and tells me that he will appear in Court that afternoon. If I haven't heard anything, phone him before 4:30 Quebec time. I can ask for him, Pierre. I am grateful for his help, and will call back. I take a couple of hours off work. Tracey phones and leaves a message while Don is on hold for a radio program, *Noon Edition Phone-In*. She is at the Court House. Dave has not appeared. She has been lied to all day, and feels powerless. They know bail money is available for Dave, but can't find anyone to get that information to him. She'll call back.

In late afternoon, I hear Ryan on CBC Radio and realize for the first time how bad conditions are - four to a cell, a bed only for one, no extra blankets. Three sleep on the concrete floor. Until then I'd been deluding myself. After all, a jail had been emptied so surely there were safe and relatively comfortable with accommodations for all.

I call Pierre. He says Dave will probably appear in Court tonight. I can call him around 7:30 to find out. Will he be there at that hour, I ask. He assures me he will. At 7:30 the voice mail recording tells me the offices are closed. Thanks a lot, Pierre! Tracey phones a few minutes later. They've had a call from the Legal Collective. Dave will be in Court shortly.

I take a shower. While I'm showering, Dave phones from jail. He asks Don if bail money is available. Don tells him that bail has been available since early Monday thanks to a group Don Kossick is involved with. Tracey phones right after. They have arranged bail, and are going to pick him up.

Then it's wait, wait, wait. No call. In view of all the runaround since Sunday, I'm not prepared to believe he's out until I talk to him. I get a cell phone number for Pete Garden, who has bailed Dave out. Dave's right there with him. We talk. I have never heard Dave so exhausted, but

he's relieved to be out. They will stay at a motel in Quebec City, get a good night's sleep and start home the next day. They'll check in with us each evening on the way home. Dave apologizes for the stress he has caused us. (The stress *he* has caused us??) My son needs to offer no apology. The apologies I seek are from the Canadian authorities who orchestrated this piece of state terrorism.

Tuesday April 24: When I get home after five, there is voice mail from Dave. Would I please order new glasses for him - his got lost during the arrest. What else hasn't he told me, I wonder. Where the glasses lost, or broken? Does he have injuries? Finally, he and Tracey call later that night. We have a good long chat. Dave has started to realize just how serious his situation could get. (So have I - just that day, too!) I urge him to discuss the matter with Saskatoon lawyer Tim Quigley, who has offered his help.

One of the things Dave is wondering about is if the charge will affect his trip. His trial is booked for late May. I ask him if he discussed the travel date with his lawyer. He says he had very little time with the lawyer, who wasn't even at his court appearance. (And I'd been thinking he would have had a chance to discuss the situation fully with the lawyer! Isn't that his legal right?)

Thursday, April 26: Dave phones from Saskatoon around 11 AM. They're back! We arrange to see them later that night. I can't get there quickly enough. Finally we see them at 6 PM. Hugs all round. Then they take us through the whole story. Tracey shows us the marks from the taser. They are large red circular marks, and look as if they have left small scabs. She has about five in all - three on her upper thighs and two on her buttocks. She says she felt degraded when they attacked her with the taser. *What invisible scars do you have*, I wonder but don't ask.

It's the details of their story that stay with me and bother me. For instance, Dave said they were left in the area for quite a while after their arrests. Of course, they were handcuffed with the plastic restraints. The police took off their gas masks so they could get full "benefit" of the earlier attack. *What was in the spray*, I wonder but don't ask. One Ontario police officer put the mask back on him at one point. Dave was grateful. *How bad did Dave look for a riot cop to do that*, I wonder but don't ask. That question won't leave me alone.

Tracey eats about a third of a pasta supper. She says



photo: Darren Ell

she hasn't had much appetite since the gas attacks, and has little sense of taste. Tomatoes in particular taste strange.

Later that night I meet Ryan Meili for the first time. I am impressed. He tells me that he was told Dave was being released when he was. He saw Dave in the line ahead of him. (Dave didn't see Ryan because he didn't have his glasses.) They had a very

difficult time Monday, not knowing where Dave was and not wanting to tell us that. *What did that do to Tracey*, I wonder but don't ask.

Afterthoughts: This fight is getting ugly. Chretien and his gang are trying to marginalize and criminalize the protestors. The people I know who went to Quebec are among Saskatchewan's best and brightest. What will this experience do to the hundreds and thousands of protestors? We cannot and must not let Chretien and his government away with this gross violation of their civil liberties and trashing of their characters. How ironic that this occurred at the same time Canada was lecturing the new "democracies" of the hemisphere on democracy. Actions speak louder than words, Jean!

Every time I read about Jaggi Singh, I am heartsick. What is he going through? What will they do to him? What is this doing to *his* family?

The left is a mighty force. All it took was a couple of phone calls and we started driving them crazy at the prison. Dave says they told him lots of people were phoning about him. Did that delay his release? Who knows. On Sunday morning I am given the name of Karl Flecker of the Polaris Institute (they are collecting personal stories to show that the FTAA "democracy clause" was violated that week-end). I saw him interviewed from the Quebec streets the day before. I reach Karl on his cell phone, and he helps me throughout the week with strategizing and logistics.

I am so grateful to all the people who helped and are still helping. We have to get the charges against all the protestors dropped. We have to keep the heat on the Chretien government for their role in orchestrating state violence against Canadian citizens and other citizens of the hemisphere.

Martha Tracey is a member of SGEU and the Moose Jaw and District Labour Council. Long long ago she was editor of Next Year Country. She and her partner Don Mitchell are the proud parents of Dave and Tracey Mitchell.



photo: Laurie Hergott

PARALLELS OF DEMOCRACY

IN THE SPRING OF 1989 WHEN STUDENTS RAISED THEIR VOICES AND PROTESTED IN TIANANMEN SQUARE, WESTERN GOVERNMENTS (INCLUDING THOSE INVOLVED IN THE FTAA NEGOTIATIONS) PRAISED THEM AS BEING HEROES FOR FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY.

TWELVE YEARS LATER (ALMOST TO THE DAY) THESE SAME GOVERNMENTS AND SELF-PROCLAIMED CHAMPIONS OF DEMOCRACY ACCUSE OUR STUDENTS, AND OTHERS WHO PROTEST THE CLOSED DOOR (CORPORATE DOMINATED) FTAA NEGOTIATIONS, OF BEING ILL-INFORMED, MALCONTENT, VIOLENT THUGS. THESE "CORPORATE PUPPETS" CREATE A FORTRESSED CITY SURROUNDED BY THOUSANDS OF POLICE ARMED WITH TEAR GAS, PEPPER SPRAY, WATER CANNONS AND BULLETS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM THOSE THEY ACCUSE OF BEING "ANTI-DEMOCRATIC." HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU NEED TO BUY DEMOCRACY IN THE AMERICAS? AND WHOSE DEMOCRACY?

Larry Hubich is a staff rep for Grain Services Union who is appalled that tax dollars of normal everyday citizens are being spent to muzzle normal everyday citizens and bar them and their opinions from the debate being carried on by the corporate elite.

photo: Darren Ell



photo: Dave Durning

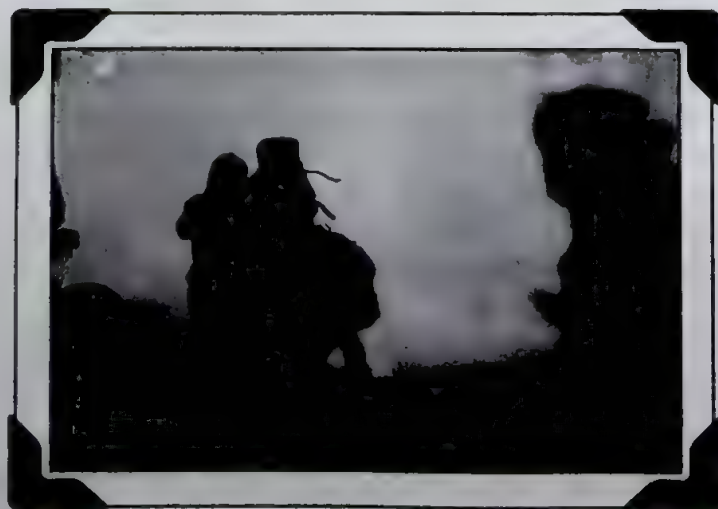


photo: Todd Krakowski

LES CHOCOLAT

*When the gates were locked,
these protesters stayed inside to see what would happen.*

by Neil Sinclair & Jason Hanson

The protests in Quebec have spawned a lot of important stories, many of which deal with subjects we'd rather not have to face such as violent confrontations, police brutality and the general repression of legitimate dissent in our country. In Canada, we tend to expect something a little more civil in our political discourse than fences, tear gas and batons. To be treated en masse like terrorists leaves an indelible bad taste in the mouth.

Nonetheless, the stories need to be told and we need to know what is happening. At the same time, we can't let the forces of darkness eclipse the kindness, generosity and fun that also accompanied the Quebec experience. To that end, we offer this account.

On Thursday, April 19th we entered the "security" area that in a few short hours would be dubbed "Fortress Quebec." It was ostensibly a sight-seeing tour since none of us had really seen Old Quebec or the Chateau Frontenac, but in the back of our minds we wanted to experience the police state that we knew would soon be emerging there. At about 10 AM we went inside the wall.

Our small group included most notably a Saskatoonian named Olin Valby, a most pleasant and gregarious young man who had taken it upon himself to act as the official Easter Bunny of the Quebec Summit. He would approach anyone and offer them an Easter "chocolat" and, if time and interest permitted, would engage the recipient in conversation. This afforded us an unbelievable opportunity to really talk to a wide variety of people within The Fortress.

Our adventures began when Olin boldly entered a

private RCMP office within the Old Quebec tourist center. By the time we caught up with him, he had already dispensed a chocolate egg to a surprised officer. He was hurriedly walking out, with the officer getting up behind him. I think we were surreptitiously followed after that.

On the path around the Citadel, we spoke to a couple from Chicago who had also come to protest the Summit of the Americas. The husband translated his wife's sign language, and they told us how they were constantly saddened to have to assure people they were not terrorists.

The woman taught Olin his name in sign, and we were off.

In front of the Chateau Frontenac we struck up an excellent dialogue with a security officer with the RCMP. He asked us what we expected from the coming days' events and challenged the legitimacy of protest that we all acknowledged could result in violence. He was a Buddhist, he claimed, and didn't want to see anyone hurt. He lectured us on the tactics of Gandhi and King

and, in effect, warned us that violence would only hurt the movement. Our group largely agreed but added that the police response to our actions would play a decisive role in how far things would escalate. Intimidation, unnecessary use of force and unjustified arrests would not help matters. We didn't completely see eye to eye but it felt good to get the perspective of a "cop" and to know one, at least partially, as a human being. More respect would certainly help actors on both sides of the conflict.

We strolled, we took pictures, we had lunch. By 2 PM the perimeter had been closed and anyone leaving would not be allowed back in (at least not without a



Jason inside security zone
photo: Neil Sinclair



Neil: Inside looking out
photo: Laurie Hergott

permit, which none of us had). We decided to stay as long as we could. The public square just inside the fence was vibrant and alive with music, chalk drawing and painting and even some hackey-sacking. We visited with more protesters and sent e-mails "from the inside." After replenishing Olin's chocolate supply (which, incidentally, was assisted when he lent his credit card to some strangers outside the fence), we struck out to explore.

Some considerable time had passed at this point and the quiet street corners now had one or two provincial police sporting military-looking olive green uniforms, complete with armor and lethal paraphernalia. We were unofficially escorted from block to block, never seeming to be out of sight of someone with a radio and earpiece.

We stopped in front of the Summit conference building to take a few pictures and chat with those who would talk to us. An observer from the German consulate was

fairly sympathetic to our cause, as was a reporter from a Montreal magazine who was there to cover the summit with a critical ear. A freelance photographer excitedly told us that he had just taken a few unauthorized photos of Jean Chretien as the PM walked through the foyer of the conference building. Rebels, rebels everywhere.

I couldn't help but imagine what a thorn we must have been to the security forces that swarmed the site: three men - two with video cameras and frequently opened backpacks, the other handing out chocolate Easter eggs (perhaps a diversionary tactic?). We agreed that we were probably photographed more in that half hour than in the rest of our lives up to that point.

At about 6 PM we decided to move to a point in the fence where we would be able to see the arrival of the planned candlelight march from inside the wall looking out. We thought it would be interesting to see what would happen when protesters "outside" could see that some remained within the barricade. As we made our way to the main entry/exit point of the perimeter, we were once again caught up with Olin's chocolate offerings and their resultant conversations. He would shout through the fence "Voulez-vous la chocolat?" The people would invariably smile and most would accept. Before long, we had established a little side-show with spectators and visitors marveling at the three protesters who had been "trapped" inside the perimeter.

We all engaged with different people. I spoke with a business reporter from the *Washington Times* who informed us that the wall had been ruled unconstitutional the day before. Neil and Olin chatted with people from the city, others from the U.S.A.

on a "skiing trip" and others from all over Canada. We were under constant surveillance, at times drawing a small crowd of the olive green troopers, but we were left alone to attend to our makeshift "fence outreach program."

At about 8 PM a woman who had earlier declined one of Olin's chocolates showed up behind us and struck up a conversation with Neil. She told us she lived inside the perimeter and was surprised to see us still behind the fence. We echoed the thought. We had anticipated that a sweep of the area would have put us out hours before.

She invited us back to her house for tea and we accepted. It had turned cold and we had gone hours without food, drink or sitting. The idea of tea was intoxicating. The hospitality was absolutely heartwarming. We were introduced to the family and seated in the living room where we met the cat, who took a quick liking to our shoes. Within minutes, our host's nearby relatives arrived with a freshly

baked loaf of bread, and we were made to feel like family. They called it their "Saskatoon Night." I've never felt so welcomed by "strangers."

We drank tea, ate bread and visited. We talked about politics - from the farm scene in Saskatchewan to the present summit issues brought to the fore in Quebec. Our host told us how the fence had disrupted their lives. Visits from anyone outside the wall were completely prohibited so no family or friends would be allowed in. Anyone 12 or older needed a security pass to come and go. We talked about education, about the beauty of the country, about the diversity of the people. We also talked about the pink papier- mâché bunny with three ears, named Chernobyl Rabbit, that sat in their living room.

The visit wrapped up with an impromptu song titled "Saskatoon," with guitar accompaniment by Olin and our host. The lyrics weren't too profound but the spirit certainly was. Many a laugh was had and, with the exchanging of e-mail addresses, we were on our way.

It was now after 11 PM and we decided to make haste and get out of the "security zone" before it got much later. We stopped to let Olin phone his Grandma ("hi from behind enemy lines"), and to take Neil's picture in front of the Quebec Legislature. It was there that a police officer, in regular uniform, approached me. "Just taking a picture of your friend there?" he cautiously inquired. "Yes," I responded. "Are you with the press?" he asked. "No," I answered. He looked confused. "Do you have accreditation?" I put on my confused face. "Do you have a pass? A card?" he clarified. "No," I shrugged, pretending to be completely mystified. He looked at me for a moment and then said, "Okay."

Olin and Neil came over and the officer asked Olin if he had anything in his basket besides chocolate eggs. Olin lifted the nest of fibers out to show he didn't and we were on our way with a friendly goodbye. We continued to the fence and passed a few more guards who didn't pay us the slightest bit of notice. We even received polite directions to the main exit. We were surprised with the lack of concern given to our presence behind the wall but at that hour, with only the three of us among an army of police, we were happy to be on our way out safe and sound.

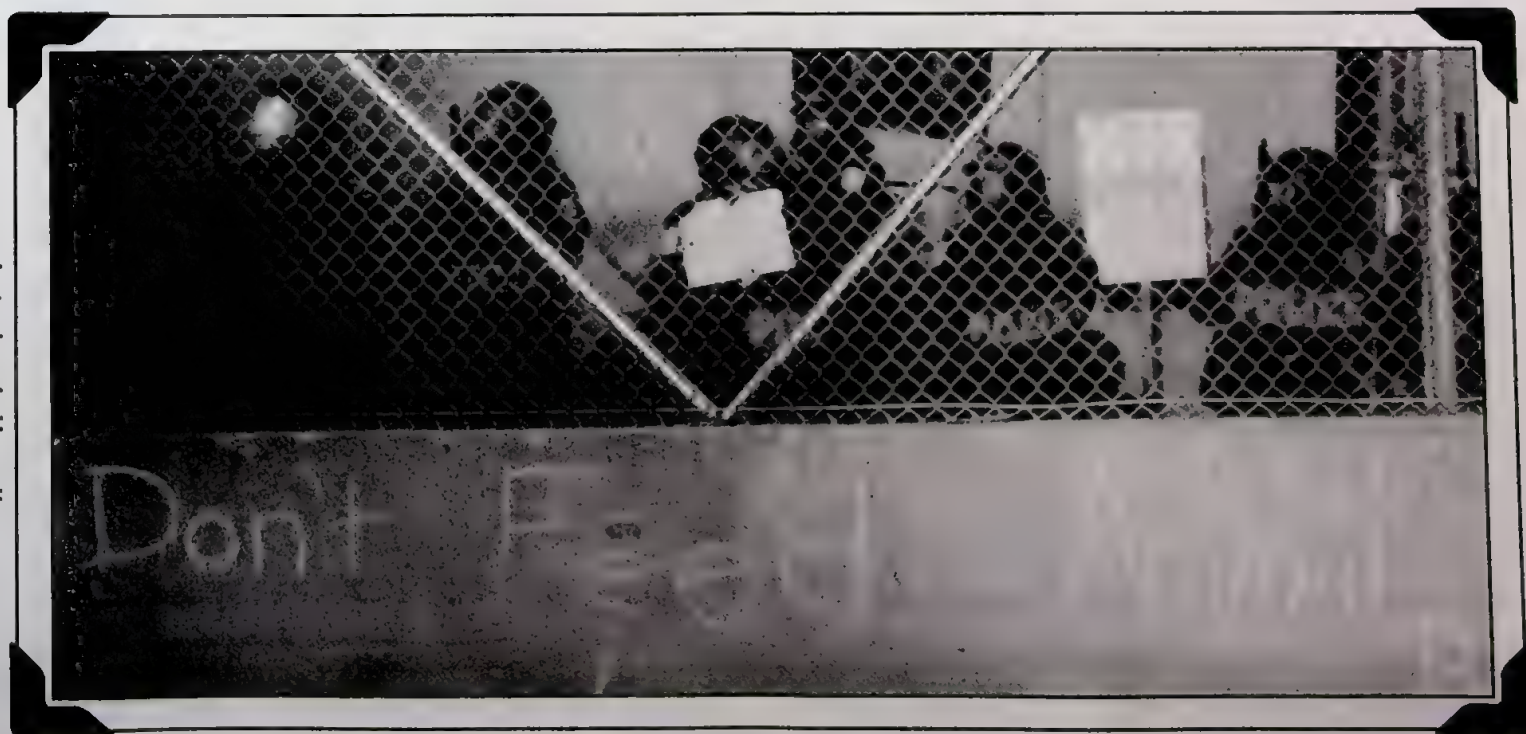
We considered the day a grand success. Olin had solidified his legendary status as the Easter Bunny Guy from Saskatchewan. Neil and I, well, we got to hang out with him. Through Olin's creativity we were able to really connect with a vast array of people in a fun, non-threatening way. I was glad to be a part of that.

There is a considerable amount of negative emotional baggage surrounding the Quebec protest. Every person in this country and beyond needs to be made aware of the insidious forces that are at work shaping our future into a desolate wasteland of consumerism and corporate control. Perhaps, though, this story can help remind us that despite the negatives, Quebec had plenty of positives, and that along with the bitter sting of tear gas we can still taste the sweet, sweet chocolate.

Jason Hanson is a graphic designer who was in Quebec City to fight the evil Darth Chrétien and the sinister corporate Stormtroopers trying to take over the universe.

Neil Sinclair is the leader of the New Green Alliance, Saskatchewan's Green Party. He also attended the WTO protests in Seattle.

photo: Laurie Hergott



Outside looking in

Declaration of the Second People's Summit of the Americas

We, the delegates of the Second People's Summit of the Americas, declare our opposition to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) project concocted secretly by the 34 Heads of State and government hand in hand with the American Business Forum.

Who are we? We are the Hemispheric Social Alliance, the voices of the unions, popular and environmental organisations, women's groups, human rights organisations, international solidarity groups, indigenous, peasant and student associations and church groups. We have come from every corner of the Americas to make our voices heard.

We reject this project of liberalised trade and investment, deregulation and privatisation. This neo-liberal project is racist and sexist and destructive of the environment. We propose to build new ways of continental integration based on democracy, human rights, equality, solidarity, pluralism and respect for the environment.

Broken Promises

Since the 1994 Miami Summit, the Heads of State and government have committed themselves to reinforce democracy and human rights, to support education and to reduce poverty in the Americas. For seven years nothing has been done. The only issue that has moved forward, taking advantage of the deficit in democracy, is the negotiation of the FTAA.

This is not the first time that presidents and Heads of State have promised a better world. This is not the first time that the people of the Americas have been told to wait for the fruits of free trade to come. This is not the first time that we are forced to take note that the Heads of State have broken their promises.

The FTAA project is a charter of investors' rights and freedoms, sanctions the primacy of capital over labour, transforms life and the world into merchandise, negates human rights, sabotages democracy and undermines state sovereignty.

The Asymmetric Americas

Indeed, we live in an Americas marked by intolerable inequalities and unjustifiable political and economic asymmetries. Half of the population of 800 million, of whom almost 500 million are Latin American, live in poverty. The south has a debt of \$792

billion U.S.A. to the north, resulting in a debt servicing of \$123 billion U.S.A. in 1999 alone. Capital, technologies and patents are concentrated in the North. Canada and the



photo: Dave Durning

United States hold 80 percent of the economic might. Many new jobs are in the informal sector, where labour rights are constantly flouted.

Free trade agreements aggravate inequalities between the rich and the poor, between men and women, between countries of the north and countries of the south, and destroy the ecological links between human beings and the environment. Twenty percent of the world population consumes 80 percent of the natural resources of the planet. These free trade agreements prioritize exports at the expense of the needs of local communities. We are witnessing the consolidation of economic and legal corporate power at the expense of popular sovereignty.

Free trade agreements favour the commodification of public goods and the planet (including water and genetic heritage). The neo-liberal logic reduces the citizen to a mere consumer and ultimately to a product. It favours short term gains without considering the social and environmental cost of goods and services. Under the pressure of large agribusinesses and dumping policies, free trade agreements threaten local small-scale agriculture, mostly performed by women, putting food security in danger.

Free trade agreements encourage the systematic privatisation of public goods such as health, education and social programs along with of Structural Adjustment Programs in the South and budget cuts in the North. These agreements rely on women to take up the collective tasks



respected. We want to live together in a true equality between men and women, to take care of all of our children and to share the wealth fairly and in solidarity.

We want complete respect for workers rights, trade union rights and collective bargaining.

We want to ensure the primacy of human rights and collectives rights, as defined in international instruments, over commercial agreements.

We want states that promote the common good and that are able to intervene actively to ensure the respect of rights. We want states to

now abandoned by the state.

Free trade agreements foster the marginalisation of indigenous people and the appropriation and subsequent marketing of their knowledge.

Free trade agreements lead to an increasing feminisation of poverty and an exacerbation of existing inequalities between men and women. For example, women get paid less, work in hard and often degrading conditions without union rights, undertake unpaid and unrecognised work for the family and community, suffer the commodification of their bodies (now the third most lucrative trafficking after drugs and arms) and are subjected to increased domestic violence and violation of their fundamental rights.

Free trade agreements are accompanied by the militarisation of entire societies through schemes such as Plan Colombia and are also related to arms trafficking.

There is no possible fair agreement in such a context.

What we Want

We want to build bridges between the peoples of the Americas, draw on the pluralism of our histories and our cultures and to strengthen each other in the exercising of a representative and participatory democracy. We want to share the same passion for an absolute respect of human rights and the same commitment to have these rights

strengthen democracy, to ensure the production and distribution of wealth, to guarantee universal and free access to quality public education, and to health care particularly concerning women's reproductive rights. We want states to eliminate violence against women and children and to

ensure respect for the environment on behalf of the current and future generations.

We want socially productive and ecologically responsible investment. The rules applied across the continent should encourage foreign investors who will guarantee the creation of quality jobs, sustainable production and economic stability, while blocking speculative investments.

We want fair trade.

We welcome the conclusions of the deliberations of the different forums in the People's Summit. These reflections will be integrated into the Alterna-



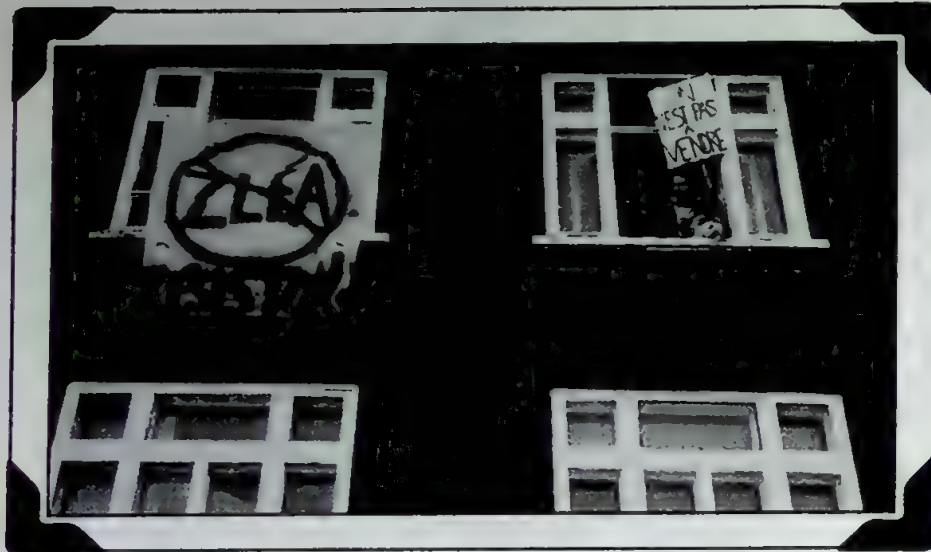
photo: Dave Durning

tives for the Americas document.

We call upon the peoples of the Americas to intensify their mobilisation to fight the FTAA project and to build other integration alternatives based on democracy, social justice and sustainable development.

ANOTHER AMERICAS IS POSSIBLE!

Quebec, April 19, 2001



Residents of Quebec City show their support
photo: Natasha Goudar

Favourite thing: I was hosted for the weekend by an amazing Quebec City resident who works as a reporter and political analyst for an independent radio station. His warmth, political activism and disgust over the way his city was treated by Summit organizers and the police made it an even more memorable experience for me.

Least favourite: Most of the trade union members there for the big march on April 21 did not have an opportunity to discuss options for their participation in various levels of civil disobedience. This led to major confusion for marchers unsure of where to be, but more seriously put people's health and safety at risk by not ensuring they had adequate information in advance.

David Durning is a National Representative for Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada and he was there because it was the only place to be.



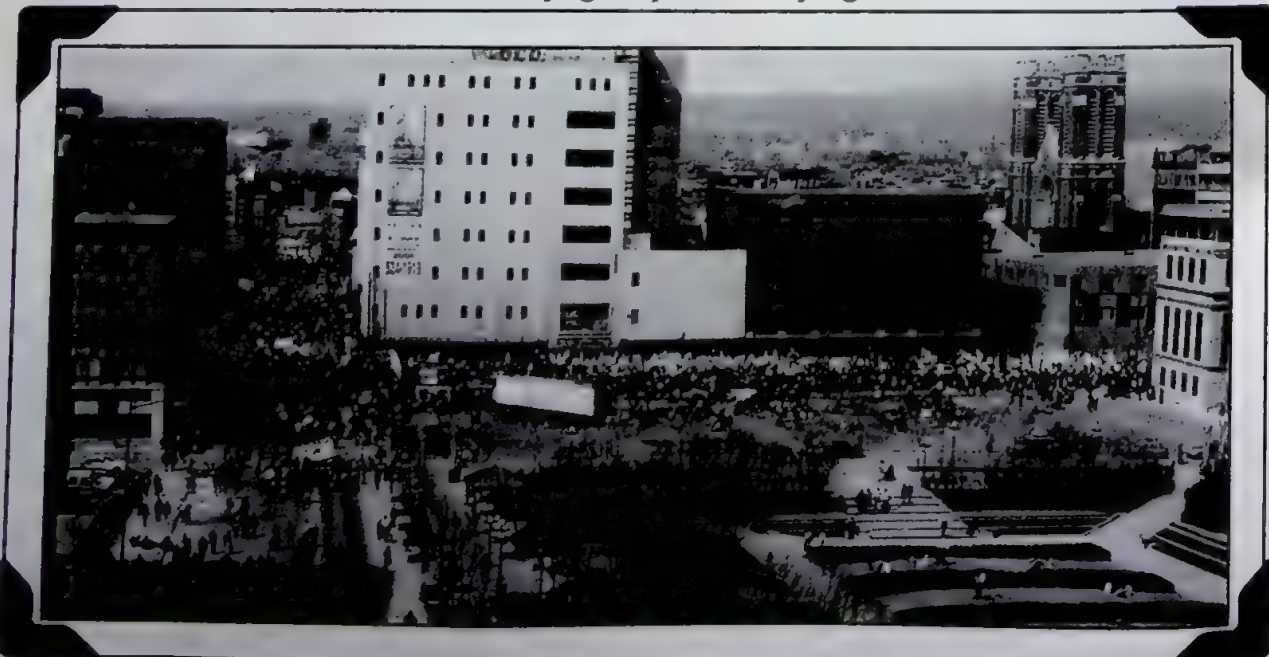
*"To the left, to the left,
Not to the right to the left."*
photo: Laurie Hergott

Favourite thing: Listening to Tracy Chapman's song "Talking about a Revolution," and all the speakers at the rally pressing us to send a strong message to Chrétien. People seemed motivated and empowered and I was sure we were all going to the wall.

Least favourite thing: During the march when we got to the point where it narrowed, some turned left but most turned right. Halfway up the hill I stopped and briefly watched thousands of people march away from the wall.

Louise Comtois has been a union member and activist for over 20 years. She travelled by train from Moncton, NB to go to the wall - the physical example of the government's flagrant protection of big business.

March turns right
photo: Laurie Hergott



Two Generations

A lawyer and his daughter travel to Quebec City to protest the FTAA and end up assaulted by their own government.

by Tim Quigley

My daughter, Ellen, and I travelled to Quebec City to take part in the events surrounding the FTAA Summit. I am a board member with the Council of Canadians and so we primarily took part in events sponsored by the Council and in marches involving other Council members.

I took Ellen with me because she is a very politically active young woman. One of the things that left-wing parents need to be mindful of, in my opinion, is not to proselytize too much lest your children become turned off or, worse yet, turn to the right. So, while my wife and I have always tried to convey sound values for our three daughters, we have not preached to them. I am pleased to say that all three seem to have a progressive streak. Ellen is the eldest and the most interested in politics. Because I am on the board of the Council of Canadians, I had an opportunity to go to Quebec City and it just seemed a good thing to take her. I am very pleased that she came. We both experienced and learned a lot and I have no regrets about it whatsoever.

Our time began with a training session on civil disobedience. In the session we learned at least two important lessons: the need to establish and maintain links with other members of an affinity group and the usefulness of vinegar in dealing with the effects of tear gas. However, when lessons are learned in the abstract they are not as valuable as when put into practice, as we learned the very next day.

On Friday, April 20, along with thousands of others, we took part in a huge march that began at Laval University and wended its way through downtown Quebec City.



Storefront Art
photo: Laurie Hergott

We were constantly amused by the colourful costumes and the witticisms on posters and signs. We even saw the infamous catapult, whose use for firing teddy bears at the police has landed Jaggi Singh in jail. At a certain point, we saw several people branching off from the main march and, along with Maude Barlow and other Council activists, we went to see what was happening. Suddenly, while we were debating which way to turn, a convoy of vehicles containing police and soldiers went by us, shrieked to a stop, reversed and went away. At the next intersection we realized that other people had turned off from the main march at the next street and had prevented the police from going through. We caught up with that group and proceeded into the old part of Quebec City near the fence that had been erected to keep us out. During the remainder of the after-



Fence coming down.
photo: Todd Krakowski

noon we saw large crowds near the barricade and had our first experience with being teargassed. While it brought tears to our eyes and was unpleasant, it was nothing like the gas we experienced the next day.

On Saturday, we first attended a huge rally sponsored by the Council. There was a wide array of speakers - community activists from France (including José Bové), indigenous people from Canada and Ecuador, labour representatives from Canada and Mexico, and two Council people, Tony Clarke and Maude Barlow. Each made a strong case against corporate control of the world. Maude, whose speech brought tears to many an eye including mine, carefully set out the options on a delicate question of solidarity: should people proceed with the official labour march organized by the *Fédération du Travail de Québec* (which would end up in a suburb far away from the barricade), begin with that march and split off to join demonstrators at the front lines, or simply hold back and proceed to the wall? This was a potentially difficult problem of solidarity because of the need and desire to maintain solidarity both with labour and with activists at the wall. Maude handled the question with poise and clarity - the operative word was "choice." We chose to hang back from the official march along with many other Council people and to march up to the wall to observe and to support those who were there.

About 40 of us proceeded to an intersection that branches out onto three freeway lanes. We could see that some demonstrators had begun to pull a part of the wall down. The odour of tear gas was already strong. As we got closer, however, the tear gas began to rain down on us. This was very different tear gas from the previous day. It

was impossible to see, difficult to breathe and some people became very nauseous. Ellen and I ended up on one of the freeway ramps where we cleared our eyes and tried to find the rest of our group. We regrouped under the freeway (although we did not locate some of our group at all that day) and then went back into the fray.

Up a very narrow and steep side street, rue Geneviève, we came to rue Saint Jean. The intersection of those two streets was packed with people and, a little further up Geneviève, we could see a line of police in helmets and shields and carrying truncheons facing off against the crowd. Squeezing through, we were able to get within 10 feet of them, take pictures (nervously), and retreat back through the crowd. We then proceeded along rue Saint Jean beside a cemetery where part of the fence had been taken down. Along with many others, we pulled on a rope trying to bring more of it down. Then we could see the police moving on the other side of the cemetery in both directions. It became clear that they would surround us and that, if they rushed the crowd or used great amounts of tear gas, there could be a stampede down hill on rue Geneviève. To avoid that dangerous scenario, we and many others left. However, we later learned that some Saskatchewan people remained behind and were arrested for simply sitting on the street.

On Sunday the Summit had ended and, after attending the taping of two episodes of *CounterSpin* with Avi Lewis, we went back to the wall. By now the authorities were dismantling the wall and we were able to get inside. It was an odd feeling indeed to walk around the most popular tourist area of Quebec City, something we had seen before but which now had become tainted by the infamy of the wall and the Summit held behind it. A 50-year-old and a 15-year-old had both experienced assaults upon them by their own government and had seen thousands of others inflicted with the same treatment. At the same time, we gained more confidence that citizen action can combat corporate control of our world.

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Tim Quigley is a law professor at the University of Saskatchewan. He teaches Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, and Sentencing, is a member of the board of the Council of Canadians and Chair of the University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association.

Doin' Time for Bustin' a Rhyme

Singing in the street was enough of a threat to land protesters in jail and treatment in the prison matched the repression on the street.

by David Mitchell

On a "gassy" knoll beside a church on rue St. Jean, we sat down to rest, to eat and to discuss how we should proceed. It was Saturday afternoon, a couple of hours before the arrests and we were in the midst of a war zone. Tear gas hung thick in the air and police choppers hovered low overhead.

Our affinity group (my friends and I) had set off with the big march earlier that day but word had spread that the police planned to strike out aggressively, far beyond their fence. People were being encouraged to break away from the march to go up to the Old City and lend support. Already we could see astoundingly large clouds of tear gas engulfing the Old City above us and wafting down upon the peaceful marchers, over a kilometre away.

After a brief discussion we decided to head up towards the fence to assess the situation and see how we might make ourselves useful. For a time we just wandered the streets around the perimeter, masking up when necessary, haunted by the fear that we weren't accomplishing much of anything. That fear had kept nagging at us since we had witnessed the fence go down the day before: What exactly were we achieving by milling around there? What impact were we making on the businessmen's ball within?

We had travelled thousands of kilometres to find that our own government, their police force and much of the corporate press had successfully rendered us voiceless and ineffective. The press sought to discredit us as naive rich kids and violent anarchists, the police bullied and criminalized us and the government either ignored us or dismissed our valid concerns as "blah, blah, blah."

And the fence itself, the infamous Wall of Shame that gashed the city like a scar, left us with infuriatingly few ways to express our outrage at the highjacking of democracy that was going on within. We could attack the fence, we could mill around it and wait to be attacked by the police, or we could declare defeat and walk away from it. None of these options sat well with any of us, and we were constantly soul-searching for some other choice - some way to feel we had made an impact and taken a stand for what

we believe in. Sitting there in the grass beside rue St. Jean, we resolved to find an action we could truly feel a part of. We adjusted our goggles and masks and set off again.

At an intersection we happened upon an extraordinary scene, and for the first time we felt as if we actually belonged there in the streets. The police oppression faded from our minds. The intersection was full of people of all ages and at their core a group of magical activists was gently drumming and chanting a sublime and soothing song that spread to fill the entire area. The words were "hold on/ hold on/ hold the vision/ until it's born," and the simple mantra-like beauty of the message captivated us. We had found a safe place in the midst of chaos and confusion, and we felt we had become a part of something meaningful.



photo: Todd Krakowski

Fifty feet or less from this intersection was a line of riot cops plugging a ragged breach in the hated wall. The street before them was full of peaceful protesters flashing peace signs. We moved forward to observe this and then returned to the intersection and the singing. Some time later, a message was relayed back to the intersection that the police line had spilled out through the breach in the wall and re-formed a few feet in front of it, menacing the peaceful protest. Some people had begun to sit down before the police, to diffuse the situation and to show their unwilling-

ness to be frightened away. They were asking for support.

We all knew immediately that we had found an action to make our own. After a quick consultation we all moved forward, took our places with the other seated activists and raised our hands in peace. Svend Robinson, NDP MP, was among those in attendance. About 50 people sat down before the police and we all calmly sang the song that had first drawn us there. Anyone who chanted too loudly was hushed - we wanted to keep the situation as non-confron-

canisters of tear/pepper gas into the crowd. Some say a concussion grenade was detonated and Svend claims he was grazed by a rubber bullet. I was grabbed by the arm and yanked into the police ranks. When I yelled "They're taking me!" Ryan reached for me and was quickly grabbed as well. An officer placed what looked like a gun to his leg and gave him a painful shock. My friend Geoff was turning to leave when he was grabbed from behind and thrown to the ground. None of us offered any resistance.

My sister Tracey, who was directly behind me and who was also being shocked in the leg by a taser gun, was pulled (not entirely willingly) to safety by Ryan's cousin Adam. Ryan, Geoff and I were arrested as the rest of our group escaped through the line of police that had already formed at the intersection. After hauling us to our feet, the police knocked our goggles and masks off our faces, forcing us to inhale gross amounts of gas. We were choking and gagging and it was a number of minutes before we could breathe. Near panic, I



Unprovoked gas attack
photo: Darren Ell

tational as possible. It seems naive now, but at the time I sincerely believed that we could hold them back by the power of our empty hands. It had worked in more repressive places than Canada.

It seemed the situation had reached a stand-still, until the police line was replaced by a fresh group. At 5:55 they warned us that they would clear the street at 6 PM and we were ordered to disperse. We asked why, and no response was given. They already had their perimeter; what legal jurisdiction did they have to remove us from that street? They warned us again, in English this time, and again we asked why. At 5:57, probably hastened by a call from the crowd for more media presence, they advanced. Beating their shields with their truncheons, they chanted "Move, Move, Move."

We were sitting cross-legged with our hands in the air and my friend Ryan, a medical student at the University of Saskatchewan, asked them why they were doing this to peaceful protesters. Their response was to fire four

was fighting for breath when one officer retrieved my gas mask and held it to my face. Her single act of compassion stood out in stark contrast to the systemic brutality that surrounded her.

We were then cuffed, charged with *entrave* (obstruction), fingerprinted, photographed, read our rights and searched. My glasses were removed from my pocket and repeated requests for them were denied. I later discovered that the police had "lost" them. We were made to wait in a bus for a few hours before being taken to Orsainville Prison to wait some more. At midnight we were decontaminated - that is, made to remove our clothes, shower and put on prison uniforms.

We were allowed to call the legal number and then led to our cells. Ryan, Sokai (who had refused to give his name), Michel (a 53-year-old man from Quebec) and myself were packed into a seven by twelve-foot cell with a bunk, a desk, a sink and a toilet. We moved the mattress to the floor to get as much of each of us on it as possible, and

shivered through the remainder of the night.

The treatment of the prisoners was shameful and systematic. We were regularly lied to and misinformed, denied reasonable requests, denied sleep and periodically juggled from one cell block to another. The only thing they didn't think of was to read us articles from the *National Post* over the loudspeaker! Prisoners with special needs were particularly vulnerable to maltreatment. Sokai, a vegan, was denied food he could eat - even plain bread. Michel had given his medications to the prison physician with detailed instructions on how often they were to be taken. He never received them, despite six or more requests. Prisoners suffering from asthma, anxiety disorder and fever were refused medical treatment.

Liberty, a 19 year old, was finally allowed to call a lawyer 26 hours after her arrest. The lawyer informed her that he was in the prison and that she should insist on seeing him. She did so, and was mocked and verbally abused by guards. She sat down and demanded to see her lawyer immediately. She was dragged by the handcuffs back to her cell, crying and pleading the whole time to see her lawyer. Her sweat pants, under which prisoners wear no underwear, slipped to her knees exposing her to many prisoners, security personnel and police. The skin on her wrists was raw and broken.

We were outraged and everyone on our cell block began chanting "We know our rights. We want to see our lawyers." We did so for about 30 minutes before guards began removing prisoners from their cells. Our cell door opened and six guards in riot gear stepped in. Michel, Ryan and I were led to another wing of the prison with a guard

gripping each arm. Ryan and I were separated at that point. The long wait continued, but much lonelier now.

I was awakened at 2 AM, cuffed and led down to the processing area. Ryan was released around that time (and was told that I was being released as well), but for some reason I was signed over to a new wing of the prison. I was summoned at 9 AM to speak briefly with my lawyer and then returned to my cell.

The rest of the day was excruciatingly uneventful. In midafternoon, we saw a human rights observer speaking with the prisoners in the cell block beside ours. Soon he was gone and we were told to pack our things because we would be moving immediately and inexplicably to another wing of the prison. This fourth cell is where I spent the remainder of my time.

Ryan and Geoff spent 33 hours from arrest to release without seeing a lawyer or a judge in that time. I finally saw a lawyer after 39 hours, and was released on bail after 51 hours. We were all arrested for the same action, but were given different bail charges, different release times, were processed differently and separately, and received different trial dates.

We had no intention of getting arrested in Quebec City. Ever since the arrests, I've been trying to make sense of what happened to us in that street. Singing and dancing in the intersection, we had regained a strong sense of belonging there - something our government had almost managed to make us forget. When we asserted our sovereignty over that street and raised a wall of empty hands and bowed heads to shame their wall of steel and concrete, they brutalized us physically and psychologically. And for stand-

ing our ground there, criminal charges are still pending against us.

David Mitchell is a student and activist involved in social justice, environmental and international development organizations. He went to Quebec City because the proposed FTAA threatens almost everything he's been working for.



Radical Cheerleaders
photo: Natasha Goudar

VOLUNTEER MEDICS

The crosses on their backs might as well have been bulls-eyes.

by Sara Ahronheim

I volunteered as a Street Medic for the anti-FTAA protests. In the course of a few days I saw so much that I hope to never see again. I treated hundreds of injured people, got tear-gassed, got pepper sprayed and felt the kind of turmoil that a peaceful society ought not to experience.

I got my breath back. I can't describe the fear. I was scared to go anywhere near the cops. But I was in Quebec to do a service - treat injured people. Now that I knew what the pain was like, I also knew I had to go back into the fray.

The cops were shooting canisters high into the air, into the back of the crowd where we were. There were only peaceful protesters; we were not up by the perimeter fence. It's so hard to stand still or walk slowly when hot tear gas canisters are being shot straight at you or above your head. I broke down many times in the fracas, because the emotion just ran so high. I thought I was either going to die, be incapacitated or arrested. When I saw the pain the others were in, the adrenaline kicked in and I began to treat them. I didn't even think about my state because I didn't feel it once I saw the injured people that needed my help.

It was a war zone. I felt like I was in the middle of civil war and urban warfare. I treated so many burned hands, from people who wore thick gloves to throw tear gas canisters back at the cops or away from the crowd, yet got their hands burned. I saw third degree burns. I flushed hundreds of eyes with water and liquid antacid. I did skin decontamination treatments to take away the pain. I treated so many injuries from people hit by tear gas canisters and also those hit by rubber or plastic bullets. I saw back injuries, head injuries, broken fingers, leg wounds and much more.

On Friday night we ended up under siege in our medical clinic as the cops advanced down Cote d'Abraham, firing rounds and rounds of tear gas. The air was so contaminated that even inside the clinic we had to breathe through our vinegar-soaked bandannas. We had all the lights out and were speaking in whispers.

On Saturday night the cops returned, shooting tear gas and rubber bullets down alleys and driveways. When they reached the clinic they marched medics and seriously injured patients out of the decontamination space at gunpoint. The cops forcibly removed all protective gear, including gas masks, vinegar bandannas and goggles, saying, "No more protection for you guys!"

They then marched them, hands in the air and at gunpoint, out into the gas. They made them walk one way, then marched them in another direction. My friend Sean said that a guy was hit in the head with a rubber bullet and the cops wouldn't allow him to stop and treat the person.



Throughout the event medics were targeted by the police: wherever my partner and I were treating people, tear gas canisters would land right beside us. Some medics got hit with rubber bullets. On Friday my friend Sean was on his knees treating a patient in a tear gas cloud on the front lines, when a canister fell right under his face and exploded. He inhaled a lot of gas right there, then he tried to stumble to his feet and narrowly avoided a canister aimed at his head. Another canister hit the wall behind him, bounced and hit him in the back, knocking him flat. A final canister rolled by his face again and exploded. He was rescued by another medic team and spent the next two days recuperating in the medic clinic on Cote d'Abraham.

We kept having to retreat to avoid the clouds of gas. At one point a canister exploded right next to me. I can't begin to explain the agony. I began to walk very quickly, barely restraining the panic, as I coughed and choked. I thought I would die. My eyes were fine, sealed under swim goggles, but my skin was burning like fire. Everywhere we turned there were more riot cops, more gas and no safe space.

Finally we managed to find a corner without gas and



Airborne tear gas cannister

They also took all the medical supplies and equipment. Finally they let the group go without any arrests. The clinic was evacuated and set up in a different location.

Another medic, Derek, treated a guy who was severely beaten by police. He had a skull fracture, was in serious shock and had a compound leg fracture. They waited in clouds of tear gas, with more and more canisters being hurled at them, for the ambulance. One guy got hit in the Adam's Apple with a rubber bullet and underwent an emergency tracheotomy. The mainstream media reported only 300 injuries. I must have treated that many myself! And there were probably 50 other medics on site.

In the midst of all this chaos and fear and pain there were bright moments. On Thursday I was present at the start of the Women's March. It was colourful, beautiful, peaceful and magical. There were huge puppets and artwork that the women wove into the Wall of Shame. The group sang songs, chanted, drummed and danced. There was a festive atmosphere with many residents waving from their homes and calling out their support.

On Friday things went bad as soon as the march from Laval reached the perimeter, but I saw some beautiful things through the clouds of gas. A group of women joined hands and danced in a slow circle, singing beautiful songs about peace and nonviolence. They were angelic, young and old, a space of quiet in the midst of a thunderstorm of pain. Starhawk led her Pagan group, with an aura of calm, straight into the tear gas. I saw them go by and felt safe for just a moment. I heard later that they went straight through the gas and the bullets, and sang and danced right by the row of riot cops. Their courage and faith was inspirational to many, including me.

On Saturday a party was going on all day in a "Green Zone" (safe, non-confrontational, nowhere near

the perimeter). A booth was set up by Food Not Bombs, a group that fed us all weekend long. There was also an art space set up, there was a group dancing and everyone felt free and beautiful. It felt like the kind of society I want to live in - until the cops arrived. A phalanx of riot cops stood at the top of the stairs looking down. They were an intimidating presence for hours while six choppers circled overhead. Eventually they gassed us.

What I went through this weekend made me realize how much stronger I am than I previously thought. I got through it all without serious injury or arrest. But I have to say, my heart hurts. My mind hurts. Most of all, my soul is aching with pain and disbelief. I am shocked at the violence I saw in the span of two days. I can't believe the ferocity of chemical weapons, and that a government would allow its police force to use such arms against its own people.

I am angered that because a handful of protesters attacked the police they reacted by gassing the thousands of peaceful protesters! These cops were heavily armed and protected, and a handful of them could have easily dealt with the violent individuals.

I am telling my story because I believe that the mainstream media is very biased. I want everyone to know what really went down. I've tried to give at least a taste of the pain I saw all weekend. I am having a very hard time processing and dealing with this. The feelings I am experiencing are similar to those I had when I came back from visiting the death camps in Poland. I want the world to know what went on in Quebec, how undemocratic and unfair and immoral and oppressive the situation was.

Yet I also want people to know that a better world is possible. Through the gas and the pain and the fear I glimpsed the possibility of and the hope for that new space. People from all walks of life, backgrounds, ages and races came together in Quebec to fight against corporate rule, and to fight for human rights, environmentalism and fair trade. I stand with the ordinary individuals, grandmothers, kids, labourers, environmentalists and humans who want to change things.

I came back from Quebec City with eyes washed clear by tear gas and pepper spray. As Johnny Nash's song says, "I can see clearly now the rain has gone, I can see all obstacles in my way." I can see, but at what price to my psyche? I still don't know. Would it have been better to have stayed home and watched it all on TV? It would have saved me the pain and heartache, but it would also have left me in my little bubble of idealism. Not to say I am not still an idealistic, romantic, optimistic woman. I am, but I am also just a little bit more realistic.

Sara Ahronheim is a Red Cross First Responder and CPR instructor from Montreal, currently studying biology at Queen's University.

Looking for the Reasons

a reporter puts the pieces together.

by Peter Garden

Waking up this morning, I lifted the curtain and let the sunlight spill in through the bedroom window onto my face. I felt peaceful and calm for a few moments before the memories crept back into my head. I walked out onto the balcony where my clothes were airing out from the two days of heavy tear-gassing. I lifted my jacket to my nose for a sniff - I could still smell the acrid stench of the gas. I wish that I could describe it. Someone said sour apples but I don't think that description really captures it.

I am now back, feeling somewhat secure in my hometown of Saskatoon but still a bit uneasy. The fear of being arbitrarily arrested for walking the streets takes a while to wear off. I have just returned from an 11-day trip to Quebec City for the protests against the Summit of the Americas.

I thought that my experiences at protests in Seattle, Calgary and Los Angeles would have prepared me for whatever measures the police would take against protesters in Quebec City. I was wrong. I was there conducting interviews for a show on a community radio station. The level of brutality that I witnessed and heard about, both inside and outside the prison, was shocking and far surpassed that of Seattle.

My experience with the police was somewhat limited but very powerful over the weekend of the protests. I was

in the CLAC-CASA (two anti-capitalist groups who support a diversity of tactics) march on Friday. The "Carnival Against Capitalism" march started at Laval University and proceeded to the fenced perimeter. The parade was full of black-clad youth, anarchist flags, communist flags, and a host of colourful costumes and creative props. The most impressive was the now-famous catapult that Jaggi Singh is accused of possessing. It was armed with a cache of stuffed animals and sparkles with the intent of staging a mock siege of the fenced-in leaders.

The parade was festive but I knew that when it reached its destination (the fence) it would not take long for many members of the march to challenge this barrier. I am quite sure, from the \$100 million security budget, that the police knew this as well.

I was at the back of the march when it reached the fence but it's my understanding that the fence was toppled immediately upon arrival. What ensued was a conflict between protesters and police that lasted several hours as police attacked with tear gas and plastic bullets and protesters returned with same tear gas canisters and pieces of concrete. Initially I did not know that plastic bullets were being used but saw people falling to their knees and then to the ground screaming in pain, often from shattered bones.

I later learned from a medic named April that this type of bullet is very similar to ones used in Northern Ireland

by the British Army. They have killed 17 people in that area alone since they were introduced in the early 1970s. "There are very specific guidelines put out by the company that makes these weapons," she told me. "They are not intended to be fired directly at people but are supposed to be an indirect hit - so you fire them at a wall, you fire them at the ground." She also said that they were not to be aimed above the waist of their target. Many of the injuries that the medics had to deal with were above the waist, some of which were at ranges of as close as two meters.

The most widely publicized plastic-bullet injury was a neck injury where a young man will likely never speak again. Others included shattered bones, spinal injuries and serious soft tissue wounds.

According to April, the most common condition that required treatment was tear gas inhalation. Many people reported that the type of gas used on Saturday was much different from the gas used on Friday. Apparently it was much stronger and had psychological effects on those exposed to it. There were also reports of gas being sprayed by helicopters overhead. While walking in the People's March on Saturday, I encountered the burning sensation from gas that was being blown downhill from about 10 blocks away. This made exposure commonplace even for those who didn't come close to the conflict zones.

Saturday also saw the appearance of water cannons and electric prods as crowd-control devices. A friend of mine witnessed a woman blown off her stilts with a water cannon. I also met a completely harmless-looking young man from Montreal who had been shocked on his back until he passed out during his arrest and was then picked up by his nostrils and thrown in a van to be taken to jail. He lifted up his shirt to show me a bruise on his back the size of a small dinner plate from the shock. His nostrils were torn and he had lacerations around his wrists from excessively tight plastic-tie handcuffs. After he was arrested he was driven around in a van for eight hours. Initially, the drivers (wearing protection) drove with the windows down through the tear gas. When he and the other detainees in the van complained of breathing problems they were ignored. They then complained of being cold which resulted in the police stopping the van, covering them with blankets, turning up the heat full blast and then leaving them to sweat for an extended period of time. This was like being re-exposed to the gas as the chemical seeped into their open pores.

These types of stories were all too common. The targets of these acts were not the people who were street fighting with the police but innocent bystanders and those peacefully protesting. I heard stories of police making up charges that made absolutely no sense considering the arrest context. I met a man named Matt who had been

cooking all weekend at the space that the Winnipeg Free Kitchen had set up. After arriving on Sunday morning to find that the police had destroyed the kitchen and had thrown away enough organic food to feed 2000 people, he was assaulted, arrested and charged with inciting a riot.

There didn't seem to be an end to the stories of abuse of power and human rights violations. On Sunday night the majority of the people from Saskatoon were in the YWCA parking lot packing their vehicles to leave. Three 15-passenger vans full of police and four squad cars raced into the parking lot and unloaded with batons drawn, ready to investigate an alleged noise complaint. I had my video camera on and began to film at which point the officers returned their batons to their belts. The altercation ended peacefully and the police left but the fear that it instilled in most of us will not be forgotten soon.

The prison guards acted as brutally as the police. Stories of women being forced to strip in front of male guards to have their decontamination showers were told to me on several occasions. This weekend will go down in Canadian history as one of the biggest acts of repression of dissent of all time. I just hope that the people who were brutalized will be strong enough to come forward with their stories or this type of abuse will only escalate during future demonstrations.

For me, this weekend confirmed that speech is not free in this country and democracy is not taken seriously by our government. I feel like we were set up in many ways. The police knew what to expect on Friday, yet allowed people to take down the fence without taking action. The fence was weak and was toppled easily by a small group of protesters with a rope. I feel that Friday's events were a pretense for the heavy repression that came down on Saturday. It was also a chance to try out some new toys like the plastic bullet guns with laser sights.

My guess is that the police wanted to scare many people out of the anti-globalization movement. I think that it did the opposite. Matt from Winnipeg told me, "They've put the fire in my belly to fight this for the rest of my life." I have heard this echoed by almost everyone I have spoken to. It's like Michael Franti of Spearhead explains, "We are like the skin on a drum. The harder we are struck the louder we will sound and the further the movement will resonate." Chrétien and his band of goons would be wise to pay heed to this message.

Peter Garden is currently working for the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation. He also produces a show for CFCR Community Radio in Saskatoon called Making the Links.

The complete interviews on which this article is based will be available on their website www.makingthelinksradio.com

Don't Wait until it's You!

by Loretta Gerlach



By now, everyone has heard about the protests in Quebec

City this April. You know that it has been estimated that 822 plastic bullets and 4,709 canisters of tear gas were used. You know that there were an estimated 60,000 protesters in Quebec City who employed a "diversity of tactics" to illustrate their disapproval of the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas and, of course, the fence. You have heard that there were hundreds of arrests and you have heard stories of the innocent people who were arrested without having violated any aspect of the criminal code. You have also heard the stories of protesters from other countries being given a hard time at the Canadian border.

Maybe you are outraged. Maybe you wish you had been there so that you too could have added your voice. Maybe you think all those "hooligans" didn't know what they were protesting about. Maybe you're an ardent supporter of free trade.

For right now, I really don't think it matters.

What we all need to talk about now is the police response to democratic protest. What happened in Quebec City was nothing short of pure police tyranny. It worries me that even those who support the protesters may not really understand what the experience was like and what it meant for democracy in Canada. Try, if you will, to imagine yourself in the shoes of a protester...

Imagine that you find the police standing in the lobby of your hotel demanding the proprietor provide your name and address to them. Imagine that the police then follow you to dinner and sit down at the next table with their guns visible. What would you do and how would you feel?

Imagine that you are stopped by the police and they demand your identification and complete access to your purse or knapsack. Oh wait, they can't do that, right? But now imagine that when you try to refuse on the basis that it is your right to do so, they tell you that they are going to detain you for "acting suspiciously." What would you do and how would you feel?

Imagine that you are peacefully and lawfully protesting, or for that matter walking down the street, and suddenly a tear gas canister is lobbed directly at you and others around you (of course, tear gas canisters are not supposed to be aimed directly at people but the police apparently chose to disregard this detail). Next, imagine that you suddenly find your eyes burning so severely that you cannot see a thing and cannot touch them. Your breath-

ing is constricted and your lungs and throat are on fire and your entire face is suddenly ablaze with a biting

pain. Now, imagine hundreds of equally blinded protesters running downhill at you trying to escape the effects? What would you do and how would you feel?

And that was the experience of the protesters who had it easy - those who were not arrested, shot with rubber bullets or water cannons.

Every single Canadian citizen needs be concerned about what happened in Quebec City. We need to talk to those in our lives who support free trade about what an appropriate response to peaceful protest *on any issue* should be. If we allow the state response to the Quebec City protests to go unquestioned, we unwittingly endorse the destruction of civil rights and democracy as we know it.

Loretta Gerlach is the Prairie Regional Organizer for The Council of Canadians. She was in Quebec City protesting and thinks that she might have inhaled all 4700 canisters of tear gas herself.

Preventing assault — Extent of justification.

37. (1) Every one is justified in using force to defend himself or any one under his protection from assault, if he uses no more force than is necessary to prevent the assault or the repetition of it.

(2) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to justify the wilful infliction of any hurt or mischief that is excessive, having regard to the nature of the assault that the force used was intended to prevent. 1953-54, c. 51, s. 37

From the Criminal Code of Canada.

My Opinion does not necessarily represent the editorial views of Briarpatch. We welcome submissions and encourage any ensuing dialogue.

photo: Dave Mitchell



A "violent" anarchist
photo: Todd Krakowski

THERE AREN'T MANY PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY WHO VIEW FREE TRADE AS POSITIVELY AS I DO. THERE ALSO AREN'T MANY PEOPLE WHO VIEW THE MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER AS A HIGHER PRIORITY THAN I DO. BUT THIS PAST WEEKEND, I WAS SHOCKED BY EVENTS IN QUEBEC CITY... STUNNED BY WHAT MY WIFE, NOREEN, AND I PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED.

I SPOKE WITH MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN THE STREET. WE WERE INTERRUPTED AS THE POLICE DOWN THE ROAD BEGAN AN EERIE DRUMMING, RATTLING THEIR RIOT STICKS AGAINST THEIR SHIELDS. SLOWLY, IN UNISON, ONE SIX-INCH STEP AT A TIME, THEY BEGAN MARCHING TOWARDS US. TO MY HORROR, THE POLICE THEN FIRED TEAR GAS CANISTERS DIRECTLY AT THOSE SITTING OR STANDING ON THE ROAD. I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD SEE THIS KIND OF POLICE-STATE TACTICS IN CANADA.

SOME WILL SAY THAT A HANDFUL OF DEMONSTRATORS GOT OUT OF HAND AND FORCED THE POLICE TO TAKE COLLECTIVE ACTION. I CAN'T AGREE. THE POLICE ACTION IN QUEBEC CITY, UNDER ORDERS FROM OUR GOVERNMENT, WAS A PROVOCATION ITSELF - AN ASSAULT ON ALL OUR FREEDOMS.

Sinclair Stevens, MP from 1972 to 1988 under Brian Mulroney, in a column he wrote for The Globe and Mail, April 24, 2001.

photo: Elaine Brière



photo: Laurie Hergott



*Community activists from the Atlantic
one was later arrested
photo: Laurie Hergott*



photo: Darren Ell

*A quick break to refuel and we'll be back.
photo: Dave Durning*

My least favourite thing was the way the police and the state confronted us at all sensory levels. They blinded us with the gas, and the goggles we wore to protect ourselves fogged up blinding us further. They deafened us with shots from their tear gas guns and concussion grenades. They struck our ability to feel with taser guns and, for some, too-tight handcuffs. The taste and smell of the gas first triggered memories of Seattle and then, as it became more noxious, created its own memories entrenched in my mind.

My favourite thing was that in spite of being brutalized and dehumanized by the wall of shame and the police, and in spite of the efforts to take our streets away from us, people still kept their spirits up and carried on. They couldn't break us; they gassed us and we still ate the Easter bunny's chocolates, they threw our friends in jail and we had a party on the jail lawn with food and cheerleaders and tents! We truly shall not be moved!

Tracey Mitchell is a student at the University of Saskatchewan. She is involved with the Sierra Youth Coalition, Oxfam and the Student Activist Network, and is excited to help bring some of the Quebec City energy to Saskatchewan communities in the coming months, minus the repression and fences.

